FOR THE
# RECORD
Friday | 27th August 2021

**WEATHER**

Intermittent thundery showers with sunny intervals are likely today and over the next three days in Hyderabad and surrounding areas.

WHY KARNATAKA DATA REMAINS HIDDEN

## Caste census findings upset the narrative

Karnataka ordered a Social and Educational Survey in 2014 when the Congress was in power under the chief ministership of Siddaramaiah. The government had said that the survey was being conducted to enable the state government to decide reservations and quotas in the OBC category as per the 127th Constitution Amendment Bill.

The survey was conducted in April and May of 2015 reportedly by a total of 1.6 lakh personnel, with 1.3 cr households in Karnataka were surveyed. The state spent a total of Rs 169 crore on conducting the survey. The task of digitising the report was given to Bharat Electronics Limited.

In April 2016, the Karnataka State Backward Classes Commission Chairperson H Kantharaj had said that the report was in its final stages and will be submitted to the government by June. He had attributed the delay to lack of data from a few districts and had added that most of the officers had been busy with some other work, extending the deadline for submission. But the report was never submitted.

The leak of the key findings in the report gives an indication of the reasons for this opposition came. The report, according to sources, revealed that Scheduled Castes form the largest community in the state, followed by Muslims.

This challenges the narrative that has dominated Karnataka politics that Lingayats and Vokkaligas are the most numerically dominant castes. The survey pegged the Lingayats and Vokkaligas quite less than what is estimated now.

Leaders from these two communities who have dominated politics in the state felt that the report would drastically change the political landscape of Karnataka.

"The opposition came not from a community perspective; they do not worry that their community will lose out on benefits. They don't worry that their community people will not get education or jobs. They think that if the report is made public then the Lingayats and Vokkaliga leaders will no longer be able to hold important and influential positions," a source close to Siddaramaiah said.

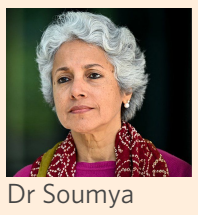
So there was immense pressure on Siddaramaiah from his own party to not make the report public. "Vokkaligas were the strongest opponents of the report," the source added. In addition to this, heads and pontiffs of mutts were roped in to exert pressure on the then government.

While this was not unforeseen, what came as a bolt from the blue was the strong resistance from the SC leaders. A large section of the SC leaders were apprehensive that with the release of the caste census report, the internal reservations for SC communities suggested by the AJ Sadashiva Committee report too will have to be implemented.

A BJP leader told TNM that though the party cannot make the caste census report public to protect its vote bank, it has been pushing for more space for OBCs within the party. It has also pushed Left SC leaders like Govind Karjol, Ramesh Jigajinagi, Abbaiah Narayanaswamy and Srinivas Prasad to prominence. But a caste census across the country will end careers of many politicians, the leader said.

(The News Minute)

## Is Covid becoming an endemic?


Dr Soumya Swaminathan

Three days ago, Dr Soumya Swaminathan, the World Health Organisation's (WHO) chief scientist, said that India seems to be "entering some stage of endemicity".

Her remarks come at a time when India has eased restrictions amid a fall in its Covid-19 caseload. The number of daily cases has fallen from a peak of 400,000 in April to about 25,000 this week.

But experts continue to advise precaution, saying the possibility of a third wave still looms. And given the threat of new variants and India's vast population, a timeline for when India actually reaches the endemic stage remains an open question.

In an interview with the Wire news website, Ms Swaminathan said that India — like several other countries — was reaching a stage where there "is low level of transmission", unlike the "exponential growth and peaks that we saw a few months ago".

The endemic stage of any disease is reached when a large section of the population becomes immune to a disease — either through vaccination or through antibodies acquired from a prior infection.

Ms Swaminathan suggested that although India would continue to experience "ups and downs" at a regional level, it's unlikely to see another overwhelming surge in infections like it saw during the second wave when patients suffered from acute shortages of hospital beds and medical oxygen.

She added that given India's heterogenous population, there would be localised peaks among people "who were perhaps less affected by the first and second waves, or in areas where there is low vaccine coverage".

However, she said "there is no crystal ball" to predict with certainty "when, where and how bad a third wave will be" and "all one can do is make an educated guess".

"Newer variants will be escaping immunity, and for as long as that happens, you can never claim the virus is in the endemic stage," said Mr Kant. (BBC)

## UP withdraws cases filed for burning crop waste

Uttar Pradesh government has said that it would drop legal proceedings against farmers accused of burning crop waste, a major source of pollution, as the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party tries to placate growers ahead of elections next year to the state assembly. — Reuters

## GHMC walks back on Indira Park entry ban

Moral policing by GHMC officials pertaining to entry into the Indira Park has generated outrage from several people of city on Thursday. Some wondered why the restrictions have been imposed now when Indira Park has been known for long as haven for consenting couples.

Officials on condition of anonymity blamed media reports which appeared on how the park had become a hotspot of "socially inappropriate behaviour". After the online backlash, the corporation has retracted the restrictions, and issued a memo to an official concerned seeking explanation. (The Hindu)

## 5Ws&1H

### *In TN, 7.5% seats for govt school students*

The Tamil Nadu government plans to set apart 7.5% of seats on "preferential basis" to students from State government schools in admissions to engineering, agriculture, veterinary, fisheries, law and other professional degree courses. A Bill to this effect has been tabled in the State legislature on Thursday. The scheme would apply to universities, private colleges, government-aided and government colleges in the state. To be eligible, students would have to have studied Classes 6 to 12 in the State government schools in Tamil Nadu.

### *Aadhaar systems down, users worry*

The IT systems of the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) have been down over the past week, sending Aadhaar holders into a tizzy as deadlines loom to link their UIDAI identity details with their Employees' Provident Fund accounts and the Income Tax Department's Permanent Account Number (PAN). That the new Income Tax portal is yet to become fully functional, has compounded problems for those seeking to link their Aadhaar to PAN by September 30. An official source confirmed that there were some glitches due to which the systems were down last week. "The system downtime impacted multiple cities," he said.

## 'Maestro' to stream on Disney from 17th September

The Telugu remake of the award-winning Hindi movie 'Andhadhun', which is itself based on a French film 'The Piano Tuner', titled 'Maestro' is set for release on streaming platform Disney+Hoststar on 17th September.

Starring Nithiin, Nabha Natesh and Tamannah Bhatia, the movie is black-humour crime thriller, and has been a hit on social media with 7.1 million views on YouTube within three days of its trailer release.

#FridaysForMovies

The trailer portrays the difficulties faced by the blind. Nithiin, the youthstar of Tollywood, plays a talented musician who fakes being blind as a way to enhance his musical performance. He falls in love with Nabha, who had been roped in to play Radhika Apte's role from Andhadhun and then he gets entangled in a crime committed by Tamannah Bhatia.

Maestro is going to be compared with Andhadhun in smallest detail.

Fans of Telugu film industry are keen on this, even after knowing the story line.

The movie is directed by Merlapaka Rajkumar,

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## 'Acharya': Former naxalite saves temple funds

Chiranjeevi's 'Acharya', a sociopolitical action drama directed by 'star captain' Koratala Siva is likely to hit big screen on January 12. KajalAgarwal, Sonu Sood, Pooja Hegde are also part of this movie, which is about a middle-aged naxalite turning into social reformer, launches a fight against the endowments department over misapproprpriation of temple funds and donations. Jisshu Sengupta plays antagonist.

As RRR is ready for Dusserah race, the team of Acharya stepped back to postpone the movie from September to January.

— LIKHITHA SHENOY